

A BRIEF MEMORIAL

OF THE LATE

JUDGE JOHN K. KANE,

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTION FOR THE
INSTRUCTION OF THE BLIND.

PREPARED BY DESIRE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS,

BY

ROBLEY DUNGLISON, M.D.,

A MEMBER OF THE BOARD.

boy 14.
Library
8542
Washington, D.C.

MEMORIAL.

THEIR late distinguished vice-president—JOHN K. KANE—from the very first, took profound interest in the success of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind; but it was not until the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Board of Managers, held on the 6th of March, 1837, in the hall of the American Philosophical Society, that he was elected into the Board. From the moment of his admission he became one of its most active, energetic, and able members. The first motion, made by him on the 6th of June, was to determine what measures should be adopted to testify the respect of the Board for Mr. Birch, a great benefactor of the Institution, who had recently died; and the result was the tablet erected to his memory in the exhibition-room, and the purchase of the burial-lot at Laurel Hill. On the 3d of July, following, the first Committee of Instruction was appointed, of which he was a member; as he subsequently was of the Executive Committee, the Committee of Admission and Discharge, the Committee of Finance, and, lastly, of the present Committee of Instruction, of which he still formed part at the time of his decease. In the year 1847, he was appointed one of the vice-presidents; and, on the resignation, by Dr. Robert M. Patterson, of the office of vice-president, in 1854, became senior vice-president.

In addition to the various official positions which he occupied in the Institution, he usually formed an important part of committees on special subjects; and, when it became necessary to enlarge the Institution, he was, on the 20th of January, 1842, made chairman of a committee to inquire into the expediency of remodelling the whole; and on the 14th of February, an organization, on a more extensive scale, was recommended by the committee, in conformity with a general plan suggested by the Board, the details of which were left subject to modification by the committee. The Board, at the same time, resolved, that it was expedient to erect a "Birch Retreat," and that the same committee should be charged with its organization. This

"Retreat" was designed for those pupils whose terms had expired, and was the prototype of the present "Home." On the 21st of April, 1842, the Committee of Organization reported a system of general arrangement and management, with a series of revised by-laws, such as exist essentially at the present day. The last meeting of the Board at which he appeared, was on the 7th of January, 1858.

A reference to the Minutes of the Board of Managers exhibits the many important proceedings of the Board, in which Judge Kane was personally engaged for the promotion of an institution for which he felt so profound and abiding an interest; and yet none but those with whom he was associated can know how zealously and ably he co-operated with them. There was not, it may be safely affirmed, a single question of magnitude in which he did not participate, and on which his cultivated intellect did not shed light, and facilitate a satisfactory determination. Although absorbed in matters of the greatest moment, first in the active exercise of his profession as an advocate, and afterwards in the elevated and responsible position of Judge of the District Court of the United States, he was generally present at the meetings of the Board; and it may be said with truth, that the presence of no member was hailed with more satisfaction. At all times, and under all circumstances, courteous, gallant, and conciliating, he was as open as he was fearless in the exposition of his views; ever solicitous to avoid giving pain, and never permitting himself to be unduly ruffled at the honestly-entertained and frankly-expressed convictions of others. The Board have, indeed, lost in him an able, energetic, conscientious, and exemplary associate; the blind, one who could not be surpassed in intensity of devotion to their best interests; and it is to commemorate the sad bereavement, which every one connected with the Institution has sustained by his death, that the Board of Managers have directed this brief memorial to be preserved in the archives of the Institution.

At a meeting of the Board of Managers, held on the 4th day of March, 1858, it was resolved, that a copy of the above memorial be appended to the next Annual Report of the Board of Managers, and that it be printed in raised characters for distribution among the pupils of the Institution.

March 21. 1859.